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ABSTRACT

The need for humanistically-oriented research may be viewed as the unfinished business of humanistic psychology. Additional research is needed to support some of the theoretical positions of humanistic psychology which have emerged from clinical practice, education, and management consultation rather than from laboratories and field studies. The methodologies of humanistic psychology do include laboratory experimentation and its insistence that the phenomena it investigates must be observable, measurable, and repeatable. But the methodologies also include several alternative approaches: (1) phenomenological approaches, which strive to reflect and intuit on phenomena; (2) systems approaches; (3) human action research, which investigates how human actions differ significantly from other changes in nature; and (4) the mythic method, which attempts to reveal the meanings hidden within emergent patterns contained in the symbolic content of cultural and personal myths. Saybrook Institute was founded in 1970 to foster research in humanistic psychology through graduate education. Students are permitted to use any research method which is appropriate for the problem under investigation. Several recent dissertations illustrate the efforts which have been made by Saybrook students in humanistic research. Humanistic psychology has increased the ways in which investigators can discover, explain, and apply principles of humanistic psychology. Four pages of references conclude the report. (NB)

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HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY: SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS*

Stanley Krippner, PhD**

Several traditions in psychology are defined by method, by a firm insistence on solid evidence as a basis for making new entries in the record of scientific knowledge. Humanistic psychology, however, is defined by its model of the person, by its insistence that the body of scientific knowledge about people will develop most usefully if it is guided by a conception of people as they know themselves rather than by some non-human analogy. These traditions, of course, are not incompatible; psychologists with a humanistic orientation may seek to check out their ideas by means of systematic scientific research (Child, 1973, p. 14). Indeed, one might refer to this need for humanistically-oriented research as the unfinished business of humanistic psychology.

The Humanistic Tradition in Psychology

In American psychology, the humanistic tradition was present from its earliest days, as represented by William James (1890). James' forthright espousal of a humanistic model of the person was not entirely shared by the "functionalist" and "structuralist" psychologists who succeeded him, and was altogether rejected by the "behavioristic" movement (Child, 1973, p. 14). Apart from practicing clinical psychologists, who could hardly fail to be somewhat humanistic, only a few voices -- notably those of Gordon Allport (1968), George Kelly (1955), Gardner Murphy (1947), and Henry Murray (1938) -- continued to cry out against a narrow and mechanical view of human beings. In addition, "organismic" psychology (e.g, Angyal, 1941; Goldstein, 1939) and the

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Gestalt psychotherapy movement (e.g, Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman, 1958) emphasized holistic approaches to the study of personality.

Humanistic models retained their prominence in Europe. Especially important were the psychoanalysts (e.g., Adler, 1927; Jung, 1933) who reacted against what they considered the mechanistic elements in Freudian theory. Europe was also the locus of the development of phenomenological and existential approaches to psychology (e.g., May, 1967) and psychiatry (e.g., Frankl, 1963). Humanistic psychologists were surprised to discover in the 1960s that humanistic philosophy was present in various forms in the continental European phenomenological and existential tradition. Indeed, the idea of an existentially-oriented investigation of human nature had been suggested by Soren Kierkegaard during the early 19th century. Edmund Husserl's call for returning to concrete lived experience, Martin Heidegger's insistence on the investigation of existential elements of the human condition, Jean-Paul Sartre's existential psychoanalysis, Ludwig Binswanger's and Medard Boss' Daseinanalysis, and Victor Frankl's logotherapy had much in common with the humanistic psychologies that were being advocated in America by Abraham Maslow (1961) and Carl Rogers (1961). Charlotte Buhler (1965; Buhler & Massarik, 1968) spanned both the European and American tradition, defining humanistic psychology as the scientific study of behavior, experience, and intentionality.

In different forms, these approaches to psychology all had taken the position that a person faces the meaning of one's life as the central problem of existence. Since the acknowledgement of this philosophical parallelism, there has been a fruitful cross-fertilization of ideas. More research,

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however, is required in order to evaluate the influence of phenomenology and existentialism upon humanistic psychology. Additional research is needed to support some of the theoretical positions of humanistic psychology which have emerged from clinical practice, education, and management consultation rather than from laboratories and field studies.

The Researcher as Explorer

The orthodox approach to research design calls for experiments which use measurable variables, based on the idea of hypothesis testing and the model of explanation and prediction. This design is certainly appropriate for many problems faced by humanistic psychologists as well as by psychologists representing other orientations. However, humanistic psychologists find that some questions call for qualitative and nonexperimental designs that are based on models that are viewed critically or even rejected by many other psychologists.

In recent years, however, the orthodox model used by experimental psychologists has been found to be vulnerable in several areas, e.g., its inability to verify hypotheses through inductive methods, its lack of attention to the role of hypothesis creation or context of discovery, and its inability to demonstrate the analytic-synthetic distinction between theoretical and observational statements (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. x).

Methods are the particular activities that are used to achieve research results. Methods include various experimental designs, sampling procedures, measuring instruments, and the treatment of data. The word "method" retains the meaning of its etymological roots. It is made up of the root words "meta"

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and "hodos"; "meta" means "from or after" while "hodos" means "journey." Thus, the word "method" is a going-after or a pursuit. In the case of science it is a pursuit of knowledge. The word "methodology" adds the root word "logos," the source of world order and intelligibility. "Methodology" is thus the examination of the possible plans to be carried out -- the journeys to be undertaken -- so that an understanding of phenomena can be obtained (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 5).

The researcher in humanistic psychology not only is guided by words with Greek roots, but initiates a pursuit foreshadowed in myths from Greece and other ancient cultures. Joseph Campbell (1968) has described the "hero's (or heroine's) journey" as observed in countless mythic sagas:

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow(s). (p. 30)

Abraham Maslow (1966) presented a similar concept in describing the scientist as an explorer, observing that "The feeling of the scientific originator is that of a first explorer of an unknown wilderness, an unknown river or a strange mountain pass....The process of acquiring knowledge (at all its levels) and the contemplation and enjoyment of it is...one of the richest sources of esthetic raptures, of semireligious ecstasies, of experiences of awe and mystery" (pp. 134, 137).

Methodologies in Humanistic Psychology

The methodologies of humanistic psychology certainly include laboratory experimentation and its insistence that the phenomena it investigates must be

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observable, measurable, and repeatable. But the methodologies also include alternative approaches, four of which will be considered here.

Unlike the experimental approach, the phenomenological orientation is not concerned with causality; it emphasizes the "what" rather than the "why" of phenomena. Rather than focusing on cause-and-effect, phenomenology strives to reflect and intuit on phenomena -- describe them rather than to explain them. The aim of phenomenology is to produce self-validating linguistic descriptions of the meaning and experience which events have to the person or people being investigated (Kruger, 1979).

There is no single "phenomenological method." Methods develop in "dialogue" with the phenomenon to be explored; subjects generally are led to describe as fully as possible their own experiences in their own words. Being "objective" or "rigorous" in this framework is taking an attitude of openness to the research participant's experience as it actually appears. The research takes an attitude of someone who has explicated and bracketed his or her presuppositions and is alert to the emergence of phenomena, uncolored by unexamined bias (Kruger, 1979, p. 116). If the resulting description is accurate, future readers of the report will find their own experiences contained in the final description of the research (Polkinghorne, 1983, pp. 45-46).

Systems approaches represent another research model used in humanistic psychology (Krippner, Ruttenber, Engelman, & Granger, 1985). Although general systems theory has its roots in the natural sciences, its literature reveals a strong undercurrent of humanistic thought (Checkland, 1981). Simply put, a system may be any complex pattern of elements in mutual interaction; the

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boundaries which define a system are largely dependent on the activity being described. One can, for example, describe a human being as a system, just as a family, a culture, or a particular aspect of a human (e.g., the brain) may be described as a system. Central to the concept of the system is the recognition that it is composed of subsystems and, in turn, is also part of larger systems. Koestler (1978) used the term "holon" to refer to each entity in a system; a holon refers to the dual role of a system as both a whole and a part. A holon, like the Greek god Janus, looks both ways, at wholes and parts, simultaneously.

Churchman (1979) has argued against the laboratory method as the only way to investigate the human being, since the purpose of the laboratory is to isolate the researcher from the outside world and particularly from the unpredictable nature of humans. The laboratory can limit relationships between the researcher and his or her environment. Systems research has been successful in describing how organizing patterns, their properties and combinations, differ from their patterns of relationships with other systems (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 144).

The search for general organizational processes in social systems, for example, can be carried out through methods in which various existing systems are compared. The common features which hold across systems can be differentiated from the accidental features of each system through a combination of empirical observation and intuition. However, deduction can also be used in systems research by asking questions about what is essential for the system to operate. This procedure has been useful in the development and application of information theory and game theory (Polkinghorne, 1983, p.

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147).

A third example of disciplined inquiry in humanistic psychology is human action research (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1985). The initial question asked by human action researchers was simple, "How are human actions significantly different -- if at all -- from other changes that occur in nature?" A guided missile is purposeful in its movement as it alters direction in response to information given to it. The activity of a wild animal is purposeful when it responds to signals in its environment as it hunts for food or seeks protection for itself. But human action has the characteristic of intention, the third element of Buhler's definition of humanistic psychology as the scieentific study of behavior, experience, and intentionality.

In addition to <u>self-locomotion</u> and <u>purposiveness</u>, human action has the characteristic of <u>intention</u>. The guided missle does not act from awareness or from a plan of its own; the wild animal reacts to environmental signals but it is not <u>purposive</u> in the sense of being self-reflective and being capable of intentional experience. Rychlak (1977) coined the term <u>telospond</u> to differentiate "respond" in human action from the "response" mode of stimulus-response psychology. Rychlak proposed that his theory be submitted to rigorous research to determine the validity of the concept.

For Rychlak (1977), human motivation is implicit in the conceptualization process and is contained in the very premise being affirmed by individuals as they move through life. A <u>choice</u> is an intrusion on the regular routine of a person; the possibilities of existence surface and one alternative must be affirmed over others (p. 338). Developmental research could observe this process at different age levels, the association between choice and

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self-concept could be investigated, and the differences in choices made by individuals with multiple personality conditions would all be worthwhile lines of study (Chap. 8).

A fourth method of disciplined inquiry is the mythic method. A myth is a story which contains some profound verity (or truth) even though the events in the story did not occur as literally described. The story, told repeatedly and passed on from generation to generation, represents a collection of symbols which when interpreted convey meaning, value, and truth for those who subscribe to the myth.

The discipline of comparative mythology is a key starting point for understanding the mythic method. Joseph Campbell (1949), for example, compared the hero myths of world cultures to synthesize what he referred to as a "monomyth." This comparative study gives direction to an articulation of the mythic method. The distinction between a group's mythology, studied keenly by scholars, and an individual's personal mythology is an important recent addition to the method (Feinstein & Krippner, 1982).

The purpose of the mythic method is to enable the researcher to discover the meanings hidden within those emergent patterns or configurations contained in the symbolic content of myths -- either cultural or personal. The mythic method, like the more traditional methods of social science, generates knowledge and fosters theory building, but in a manner more familiar to scholars in the humanities. The end result sought by the researcher is, as in other human science methods, a better understanding and explanation of human beings (Collen, 1984, pp. 62-63).

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One characteristic of the mythic method is the use of a conceptual framework which resembles the research design of other methods. For example, Campbell (1949) derived the structure of the hero monomyth as the synthesis of his work on world mythologies but Di Francesco (1984) utilized Campbell's framework to organize and analyze data. Di Francesco's framework was the hero's journey, conceptualized in three stages -- departure, initiation, and return -- each with several substages. Using this framework, he analyzed several films about the Viet Nam war for their mythic content, then applied these to personal myths evident in veterans' post traumatic stress syndromes.

Foster's (1980) work with wilderness vision quests represents the use of another design applied to the mythic journey of individuals. Based largely on native American mythologies, Foster's basic structure consisted of the severance, the threshold, and the reincorporation of experience (going forth, being-in-the-world, and returning).

Procedures for data collection vary markedly. On the one hand, they may be similar to those of the historical method. On the other hand, they may involve participant-observation or interview. However data are collected, the resulting stories are subjected to the arduous process of extracting symbolic content and discovering patterns. It requires great skill for the researcher to present interpretations so convincingly that others who inspect the same data will concur (Collen, 1984, pp. 63-64).

Examples of Research in Humanistic Psychology

Saybrook Institute was founded in 1970 to foster research in humanistic psychology through graduate education. Accredited by the Western Association

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for Schools and Colleges in 1984, it allows students to use any research method which is appropriate for the problem under investigation. A number of recent dissertations will illustrate the efforts which have been made by Saybrook students to attend to humanistic psychology's "unfinished business."

Kessler (1984) asked the question, "What themes are disclosed in subjective accounts of personal bereavement?" She set aside psychopathological interpretations about loss of loved ones and used a phenomenological approach. Depth interviews were conducted with 31 research participants to obtain descriptive accounts of their bereavement experiences. Qualitative methods of theme analysis were used to analyze the protocols. Twenty-two thematic clusters emerged from the analysis, e.g., facing the finality of death, caring about interpersonal connections, assuming responsibility, discovering new strengths. The data were generally consistent with the findings of previous research, but also highlighted the qualitative dimension of mourning. They lent support to an existential view that crisis situations can contribute to a deeper awareness of the human condition.

Busch (1985) studied a therapeutic community from a human systems perspective. The object of the study was the House of Affirmation which treats emotional disorders among members of the clergy. The organization was viewed as a special case of an open human activity system interacting with multiple environments. Problem situations were focused upon which were originally vague and poorly defined. The investigation achieved the goal of guiding the community through a process of discovery of the discrepancies between the values it held and the organization's actual practice. The result of the process was "self-renewal" and the results have relevance for

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organizations which have a similar desire to discover internal problems and take action to renew themselves.

Quinn (1984) focused upon anti-nuclear activism in which individuals chose to oppose the laws of their society. Fifteen adult protesters and 15 non-protesters were administered a battery of standardized instruments and were interviewed in depth. The protesters attained significantly higher results on measures of moral reasoning and nurturance, but not on measures of self-esteem. Depth interviews found the protesters to be higher on moral reasoning, moral affect, self-esteem, and humanistic values, but not on humanistic child-rearing practices. The different results from the two methods of investigating self-esteem were provocative; it was considered likely that social response sets and experimenter effects were involved.

Sperry (1981) asked if the delusional and hallucinatory imagery of schizophreniform disorder patients is analogous in form and function to motifs of cultural renewal myths (e.g., centering, death, apotheosis, rebirth). In other words, can this imagery represent an endeavor toward the psychological integration of the disturbed individual? Findings indicated that the research participants' imagery did indeed take the form of various myths of renewal such as myths of sacral kingships, heroes, shamanistic initiations, and alchemical transformation. It was emphasized that these research participants were diagnosed as suffering from schizophreniform disorders, not schizophrenic disorders in which case the process could be different.

Humanistic psychology has widened the circle of ways in which investigators can discover, explain, and apply what is knowable. These means constitute methodology. Disciplined inquiry entails bringing to bear

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well-defined research methods with rules, designs, and procedures in a deliberate and systematic fashion to learn about human beings. Besides those already mentioned, methods could include correlational, observational, evaluative, psychohistorical, and heuristic approaches (Collen, 1984). Research methodology is defined formally as the study of research methods. Thus a research methodology is a strategy employing several research methods. As such it represents a viable means of finishing some of humanistic psychology's unfinished business.

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